

Martyr's Death

ALL CREDITS TO [WINTRYONE](#) FOR TRANSLATION

Nagatsuki-sensei's note: An entry for the Re: Zero Wandoro (a one-hour contest to produce images on a topic, it seems), with the topics of "Arc 3" "Archbishop". Sort of a "After the end of Arc 3, maybe something like this happened" story. Note that what goes on here may be changed without warning in the main story. So, don't take it too seriously, just relax and enjoy.

— It was a dark place, filled with a gloomy feeling.

It was full of frigid, stagnant air. The walls glowed a faint blue, and an strange wind blew that felt both damp and dry. That was most likely an atmosphere molded to the views of those that dwelt here.

"——"

In the area shown by thin, blue-white light, a sound endlessly resonated. A sound like something being pulled along the ground; a sound like fingernails grating on a solid wall, a sound that was dissonant and disturbing to hear. Sometimes, lost in that sound, the sound of water was mixed as well.

".....ku.....Aah, Aah, AaaaaAh"

Listening carefully, the water noise could be discerned as the sound of drops striking a floor, and at the same time, the sound of someone rubbing their nose — the voice of someone crawling on the floor, sobbing, could be faintly heard.

"Why, why... why has this happened to youuuuu?"

The sobbing voice was painfully to hear and high-pitched, sounding like the wings of numberless insects. Along with the rising emotion, little by little the voice added color and grief to the cold space. The endless wailing, sobbing that seemed to be dragging one down to hell, and —

"Say, would you mind cutting that out, please? If you keep on weeping like that, it's honestly going to get bothersome, you know?"

That voice, from an entirely different direction, and even a different gender,

drifted down. The new voice made no attempt to conceal it's disdain and contempt. It seemed less like a voice meant for a weeping, grieving companion, and more like jeers thrown without mercy.

"It's not like I don't understand that you're in pain, you know? I didn't have any fond memories of him, but it's not like I feel happy that he died; someone like that ought to have at least one person who's sad that he died, I think. Look, I'm as generous as anyone else. Even a guy who had the wrong idea about hands deserves the right to be recognized that much; I have enough sense to agree with that."

"__"

"But, you know... For something that's just... can we call it an obligation? Because of that, for a companion you once taught... to go on crying in my face like that, it'll start to ruin my mood too, you see. Do you understand? Normally, that's the sort of thing you should take into consideration. It's just the bare minimum of consideration for the feelings of those around you, that's how things ought to be. Carrying on crying in front of everyone, that might feel good for the one that's crying, but it's a real nuisance for everyone else. Even the one who died, it's like you're tarnishing their honor after they died, isn't it? Not like I care, though."

"__"

"Pushing your feelings onto me... look, that's what it is, right? Others go ahead and cry or get angry, and suddenly you feel like you've woken up. I'd like to have that experience sometime. With you crying like that, isn't it like you've robbed everyone else of their right to feel sad? Really, if I happened to somehow be in a position to feel sad that he died, did you think about that? You didn't, did you? That sort of thing... it's an intrusion into my personal right to feel as I wish, don't you agree?"

Unwillingly at first, then indiscriminately, with gradually increasing liveliness, that voice arranged a long, long string of depressing words for it's crying companion. The words at the end were angry, an inevitable explosion of gloomy feelings. Regardless—

"Indeed, if this wasn't a conversation over mirrors, you would be in pieces by

now. I really think you ought to be grateful to me that it didn't turn out like that."

"—"

"Aah, not that I need the thanks. I'm quite satisfied with the modest happiness I have from day to day. Even holding on to the things I wasn't happy to receive, I have no intention of causing unnecessary trouble. I'm just living the simple life here, passing time with my beloved wives."

The voice continued as it pleased, and then finally cut off the conversation there. Except, just before the conversation ended—

"Number 122. Just now, you looked frightened, didn't you?"

it said, showing it had completely shifted its focus from the conversation. Just after that, as a sound of incredible destruction rang out, the mirror signal cut off. What happened on the other side of the mirror was unknown. There was no need to know.

"..... No one, no one no one no one, cares that you died. Why, why is it? Why is it so? You did so much, you did so much for me, you worked yourself to the bone, only for me, you shed so much blood."

Scratching at the floor, the shadow ceased crying and stood up. Both arms hung limply, the nails were peeled off, and blood dripped from pitiful wounds. But, the shadow was unconcerned. Instead, it simply pressing a bloodstained finger to its cheek — the bandages wrapped around the cheek were vividly stained with blood.

"Everyone, everyone is forgetting you. Everyone is putting you in the past. It's unforgivable. It's absolutely unforgivable."

With glittering, abnormally opened, bloodstained amethyst eyes, it stared straight ahead. There, an oddly colorful thing in this gloomy place — was an altar, of sorts.

Considering the situation of the shadow, the existence of the altar was certainly no surprise. Originally, the shadow's position was that of worshipping a certain entity. But, what should have been on the altar was unrelated to that position, and at the same time, no less horrible.

The boxes decorating the strange altar all gave off a different impression.

“Your nails. Your hair. Your bones, flesh and blood, spirit and everything else.”

Walking to the altar, the shadow opened the lids of the boxes.

Simultaneously, a clear odor mixed into the strange air filling the space. A horrible smell, that someone with normal nerves would turn their head and immediately flee from — the shadow inhaled it with a desolate expression.

The boxes were greedily upended. The shadow licked everything that fell from them, and took everything into itself. Enduring beyond endurance, breaking the taboo it had resisted by willpower alone, mixing the contents of the boxes with itself.

“—thank you, I’m sorry. With this, you and I can be one.”

Entranced, without the outbursts from before, the shadow whispered only that.

The boxes were hurled away. Tumbled on the floor, they suddenly burst into flame. The flames caught on the altar as well, and the scenery in the cave that could not be seen in the dim light before, was vividly revealed.

— Countless bones were arranged on the altar.

There were dried corpses, wrapped in vestments, as well. There were more than any sane person would want to count. Things that a certain entity had inhabited, then discarded were, by and large, gathered here.

All of them were consumed in the flames, and suddenly vanished, along with the terrible scent. In the space lit by the swaying flames, the shadow — a phantom wrapped in bandages, swiftly began walking.

It turned it’s back to the altar, to the smoldering remains of it’s loved one, without any sign of concern. After all, there was no need. Such things are unnecessary.

It was going to reclaim that person, after all. Someday, as it was itself lifted up from hell, it would do the same.

“—Please wait for me. I will never say I’ve lost you.”

After all,

“Because you are my dear, dear, most beloved — Petelgeuse Romanee-Conti.”

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